

Online Journal for Global Engineering Education

Volume 6

Issue 1 *Bridging the Languages with Engineering*
(2011-2013)

Article 12

April 2013

Tribute to John Grandin

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Recommended Citation

Zimmer-Loew, Helene (2013) "Tribute to John Grandin," *Online Journal for Global Engineering Education*: Vol. 6: Iss. 1, Article 12.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/ojgee/vol6/iss1/12><http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/ojgee/vol6/iss1/12>

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Letter to the Editor

Helene Zimmer-Loew

Executive Director Emerita

American Association of Teachers of German

Tribute to John Grandin

Dear Editor,

I have had the pleasure of knowing John Grandin since he began his affiliation with the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) many decades ago. As John began his career as a German department faculty member at the University of Rhode Island, he realized that language instruction could be successfully integrated into and on an equal basis with other disciplines. He was a pioneer in this movement which has helped maintain and expand German programs at the postsecondary level throughout the United States. Looking back on AATG annual meeting programs from years past, one sees John's name (and often in tandem with the amazing German faculty he has identified and converted) almost every year presenting sessions on the cutting edge business German courses and ultimately the International Engineering Program at URI, which has benefitted tremendously from John's foresightedness, creativity, and perseverance.

According to Martha Abbott, Executive Director of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), John served on the ACTFL Board as the representative from Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Language (NECTFL) from 2002-2004. He did not finish his term because the URI German Business and Engineering programs required too much of his time. She also served with him on the NECTFL Board where he served on the search committee for the ACTFL Executive Director in 2003. To quote her: "John was a very engaged and sage member of the Board of Directors. He had the ability to consider the "big picture" of whatever considerations the Board was making and always had a very wise perspective on the actions the Board should take. He was active in a wide variety of endeavors within the language profession and understood the importance of meeting the needs of students. He was a great ambassador from the language profession to the business world and seemed at ease in both. The URI program was an early model for other language/business partnership programs to follow and is an excellent example of programs that truly prepare students to live and work in today's global environment."

His trailblazing work in the integration of language with other disciplines represents his professional side. Perhaps as noteworthy in describing John is his human side. The term "menschlich" is one that fits John perfectly. His ability to cooperate with colleagues in other disciplines as well as his own and to convince others of the efficacy of his approach comes mainly from his remarkable

humanness, his respect and concern for others, and his gentle but persuasive ways. He continues to amaze all of us with his energy and determination to contribute professionally in his retirement. He is truly a remarkable person, and I have been most fortunate to have worked with him.

Helene Zimmer-Loew